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A

HISTORICAL SKETCH

—OF—

THIRD CREEK CHURCH,

—IN—

ROWAN COUNTY, N. C.,

—BY THE—

Rev. J. G. Ramsay, M. D.,

—READ AT THE—

CENTENNIAL, MAY 13TH, 1892.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE SESSION.

CONCORD, N. C.:
THE TIMES BOOK AND JOB PRESSES.
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HISTORICAL SKETCH.

From the most reliable data accessible to us we have arrived at the conclusion that Third Creek church was organized, at its present location, in 1792—one hundred years ago—probably in May of that year. We speak somewhat inferentially because the records of this church, prior to the year 1837, have been lost; and the records of Orange Presbytery, to which this church belonged before Concord was set off from Orange in 1796, were destroyed by fire at Hillsboro, in 1827, except one volume, embracing the years from 1795 to 1812, to which we have not had access.

That there was a place of preaching, probably, a meeting house or stand here or in this immediate vicinity, long before there was a church organization, is not a matter of any doubt. Almost the whole of the southern part of this State, from Duplin, near the mouth of Cape Fear River, to the Quaker meadows, then in Rowan, now in Burke county, was dotted over with Presbyterian settlements, in the early years of the last century. The Rev. Dr. J. Rumple, in his history of Rowan county (page 335) informs us that the Rev. John Thompson, who came into this region as early as 1751, and settled near Center church, and preached at Fourth Creek and various other stations in Rowan, for about two years, "had a preaching place near where Third Creek church now is." When the Evangelist, Hugh McAden, traversed this section in 1755 he found Presbyterian settlements, meeting houses and churches, all along his route through Rowan, which then embraced the whole of the north-western part of the State. He preached at Thyatira, then called Cathey's meeting house; lodged with a Mr. Brandon, whom he styled one of his "own countrymen," with John Andrews, James Allison and John Luckey—men who may have worshipped here, and who doubtless worshipped at Thyatira, and Fourth Creek, at that time. Dr. J. R. B. Adams, of Statesville, has in possession a short manuscript, written by his grandfather, James Adams, Sr., stating that he taught a school at this place, in 1764; and tradition says, the school house stood where the old session house was situated, which was inside of the grave yard, as at present enclosed. Dr. Adams also learned from his grandfather, through his father, that

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Andrew Morrison, who was reckoned one of the first elders of this church, and who resided near where Mr. John H. Carson now lives, attended church at Fourth Creek (now Statesville) when Rev. Elihu Spencer organized the church there, in 1764, and invited Mr. Spencer to preach at the school house here.

There was a preaching place and burying ground here before the Revolutionary war. One of the deacons of this church, Mr. Wm. A. Luckey, Jr., has in possession a collection of manuscript sermons, written by the Rev. Thomas Lyle, a seceder minister, and great grandfather of Mrs. Luckey. One of these sermons bears the inscription, "3rd Creek, May 10th, 1775," and was doubtless preached here at that time. It can scarcely be doubted that Dr. McCorkle of Thyatira, and Dr. Hall of Fourth Creek, who were ordained in 1777 and 1778, respectively, preached here during the closing years of the war for Independence. At any rate tradition informs us that after preaching on a certain sabbath, in the year 1781, volunteers were called for to meet Cornwallis, at that time invading the State. That there was a burying place here then also is attested by tomb stones still standing—one of which bears the inscription "June, 1776."

Organization.

Although we cannot, for the reasons given, fix upon the exact date of the church organization here, we learn from the first deed made to the congregation (the original copy of which is still preserved, and here to-day) that there existed here a meeting house, a session house, a graveyard, and a congregation of the Presbyterian faith on the fourth day of May, 1792. From that deed we extract as follows, viz:

"To all Christian people, to whom these presents shall come, Samuel Young of Rowan county, in the State of North Carolina, sends greeting. Know ye that the said Samuel Young for and in consideration of the love, affection and regard, which he hath and doth bear to the society of Christians, known by the name of Third Creek congregation, in the county aforesaid, of the Presbyterian Faith, hath given, granted bargained, sold, aliened, enfeoffed and confirmed unto Samuel Luckey, George Niblock, Thomas Dickey, all of the said congregation in the county and State aforesaid * * * Trustees of said congregation, by said Samuel Young appointed, and their successors in office, for the use and benefit of said congregation, for the public worship of God, and burial of their dead, and to and for no other use, purpose or intent whatsoever, all that plot or

message of ground, situated on the ridge between Third and Fourth Creek, in the county and State aforesaid * * * containing in the whole, one acre and nine square perches, including the now standing meeting house, session house and grave yard; together with the liberty of using the water of the next adjoining spring, on the south side of said meeting house * * * In witness whereof the said Samuel Young hath hereunto set his hand and seal, the fourth day of May, in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-two.

SAMUEL YOUNG."

In the presence of
JAS. BRANDON, Jr., {
SAMUEL WOODSIDE. }

We fix upon the date of this deed, as the time when this church was organized, because at that time there was here a meeting house, a session house, a grave yard and a congregation of the Presbyterian faith with Samuel Luckey, George Niblock, Thomas Dickey and doubtless others, members of the same; and that there was a session it is fair to infer, from the existence of a session house. These were all that were essential to a church organization. Samuel Young died in 1793. He was a liberal, gifted, benevolent and patriotic man.* Dr. Rumple, in his history (page 132) says: "Mr. Young evinced his Presbyterianism, in his will, by providing a sum to purchase for each of his children a Bible and a Westminster Confession of Faith."

Pastors and Supplies.

The Rev. Joseph Dickey Kilpatrick was the first pastor of Third Creek church of which we have any knowledge. Tradition says, he was born near Poplar Tent, Cabarrus county, in this State, October 8, 1763, and that his childhood and youth were spent there, and in the Waxhaw settlement in South Carolina. In the latter place he received most of his classical education, probably, at the Humphrie Academy, where, it is said, he and Andrew Jackson were cotemporary students. While there, about the time he attained his majority, Mr. Kilpatrick married Miss Margaret Dickey, and soon afterwards returned to Rowan in this State. Feeling called to preach the Gospel, he commenced the study of theology under the the direction of Rev. James Hall, D. D. We are not informed when he was licensed and ordained. His ordination, however, was after he had attained his twenty-ninth year, and must have occurred in 1792, or in the early part of 1793, as his name

*See Wheeler's History of North Carolina, pp. 359, 379.

appears for the first time on the roll of the Synod of the Carolinas, in the fall of the latter year. (Foote's sketches, page 338). He settled about one and a half miles northeast of this church, on the land now owned by Mr. James F. Johnston, where, in addition to his pastoral duties, he taught a classical school in the early part of this century. No vestige now remains of the building in which he lived except a few of the foundation stones.

Mr. Kilpatrick preached at Joppa (now Mocksville) and at Old and New Unity, and Back Creek, in connection with Third Creek. He was released from Joppa in 1796; from Old Unity in 1800; from New Unity in 1825 and from Back Creek and Third Creek only by his death, which occurred Sept. 20, 1829, in the 66th year of his age. His son, the Rev. Josiah J. Kilpatrick preached his funeral on the 7th of the next month, from Exodus xxxiii, 18, "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory." His remains lie in yonder graveyard, immediately north of the place where the old log church then stood, and just behind the pulpit in a spot said to have been selected by himself. A plain, upright marble marks the place, inscribed "for 35 years pastor of Third Creek church." Mrs. Kilpatrick survived him until 1834, when her remains were laid near his side.*

On the 8th of April, 1830, Concord Presbytery met at Thyatira, and passed the following preamble and resolution:

"Whereas, it has pleased the Great Head of the church, to remove by death, since our last stated sessions, our aged and worthy brother, Rev. Joseph D. Kilpatrick; Resolved, That Presbytery with due submission to the Divine will, express their veneration for his memory; and for his piety, zeal and fidelity now manifested in his long and successful labors in the church of Christ."

The Rev. William Henry Foote, in his sketches of North Carolina (page 359) speaking of Third Creek,

*Mr. Kilpatrick died while absent from home in company with his wife, who was not able to attend the funeral. The funeral cortege arrived late in the evening at the church, and the people held "the wake" there for the night. No minister being present next day, the large concourse of people interred the body with appropriate religious services of their own.

says: "It has been from the first a flourishing congregation. Under the pastoral labors of the Rev. Joseph D. Kilpatrick, it enjoyed numerous times of refreshing from on High. While McCorkle stood in doubt about the great excitement, which began in 1801, in Orange, Kilpatrick's heart grew warm, and with many of his people he went to take part in the great meeting in Randolph. * * * It is evident that they (i. e. the excitements and exercises) never gave him any trouble. If he could only see his people cultivating what he esteemed a proper religious feeling, it mattered little to him what external motions came with it. Some little time before his death, at a communion service in his congregation, a great excitement prevailed, and as cries for mercy and prayer arose on all sides of the house, during an interval of preaching, the old gentleman, witnessing the excitement for a time, turned to a young gentleman from Virginia and said, "It does my heart good to hear these young people pray so."

In the spring of 1797 Concord Presbytery met at Sugar Creek and appointed Mr. Kilpatrick commissioner to the General Assembly, and on the 26th day of September, of same year, it held its sessions here, for the first time. Mr. Kilpatrick was chosen Moderator and Thomas Porter represented this church as its Elder.

After the death of Mr. Kilpatrick the congregation was vacant for about a year. In October, 1830, the Rev. Andrew Y. Lockridge, a licentiate of Lexington Presbytery, Va., visited the congregation upon invitation, and on the 25th of May, 1832, was ordained and installed pastor of Third Creek and Back Creek, one-half of his time at each church. This connection continued until 1837, when Back Creek employed him for the whole of his time.

Camp meetings were common in the country congregations of the Presbyterian church in those days. One was held here in October, 1831, at which five or six preachers were present, viz: Revs. P. J. Sparrow, Thomas Espy, Wm. A. Hall, Henry N. Pharr, Stephen Frontis, and probably Mr. Lockridge. The preaching in the old log church and the meetings at the tents for prayer, praise and exhortation, vividly impressed the youthful mind of the writer, who was present, and were, doubtless, the source of much good to all who participated.

In 1833—during Mr. Lockridge's pastorate—steps were taken to build a new house of worship, and the old meeting house, (probably the first one ever erected, and still standing in 1792, inside of the graveyard, as now enclosed) was removed, and with it the pulpit canopied by its sounding board, and fronted by the desk of the precentor, who led the music, passed away forever; and the present more commodious brick edifice was erected. Jacob Krider, William B. Wood, Moses Graham, Jesse D. Johnston and Abel Graham were appointed to raise funds, and contract for the building. The original subscription paper is still preserved, and shows amounts pledged, ranging from one to one hundred dollars. The brick was made by the congregation near Mrs. Baker's mill, on land now owned by Mr. John W. Steele, and the church was completed and opened for worship in 1835.

In February, 1837, the congregation secured the services of the Rev. J. M. H. Adams, for the whole of his time. Mr. Adams was a native of South Carolina, and at that time a member of Morganton Presbytery, in this State. His pastorate continued—with an exception of a brief interval, when he removed to Asheville—until 1851, when he returned to the bounds of Bethel Presbytery, in his native State, where he died several years afterwards. Mr. Adams occupied a warm place in the hearts of the Third Creek people; and such was the anxiety for his return from Asheville, that they sent their wagons all the way to that town and reinstated him and his family here, free of any expense to him. He was regarded by all as a genial and social gentleman, and a gifted and eloquent preacher.

In September, 1838, the Synod of North Carolina met in this church. This event is an epoch in its history, and is gratefully remembered by those—few indeed—who are still spared. The Rev. Stephen Frontis was Moderator, and Abel Graham the elder from this church. In the fall of 1847 another camp meeting, and the last one remembered, was held here. This was about the time of Mr. Adams' temporary removal to Asheville. It was, doubtless, productive of much good, but particulars cannot be given, as the writer was absent from the State at the time, and but little is remembered of what transpired by the few who survive.

During the first six months of 1852, the church, in connection with Fifth Creek, was supplied by Rev. E. L. Cochran, a licentiate, from Virginia.

In May, 1853, the Rev. S. B. O. Wilson, having resigned his Professorship in Davidson College, became joint pastor of this church and Fifth Creek. He settled in Iredell county, on "the Hayne's place," now owned by Mr. George F. Shepherd. During the latter part of his pastorate, this church secured all his time. The church prospered greatly under his ministrations. In October, 1854, twenty-six additions, white and colored, were made to the church. When he left, September, 1860, for another field of labor in Tennessee, our church membership reached 273—its highest number. This venerable father still lives and preaches occasionally. Full of faith and good works, he calmly awaits the summons to rest from his labors.

During three years immediately following Mr. Wilson's removal, we were supplied, for the greater part of the time, by the Rev. G. D. Parks, now in Mecklenburg Presbytery.

In the year 1863, the Rev. G. R. Brackett, D. D., then a licentiate from South Carolina, accepted an invitation to visit us. During the following year he became pastor of this church and Unity. Our call was for three-fourths of his time; and during those war times, we promised "four hundred dollars to be paid in bread-stuffs at old prices." He remained with us until April, 1867, when he was dismissed to Harmony Presbytery, South Carolina.

From 1867 to 1869, inclusive, we were supplied, in connection with Unity, by the Rev. W. A. Wood, D. D. Those were times of unrest and apprehension, and consequently of great change. Most of our colored members—and they were numerous—withdrew, as they did from other churches, to organizations of their own. A large number also, of our own white communicants removing to Statesville and other towns, about or shortly after the time Mr. Wood left, greatly weakened us. But we were still left, considering the times, in a reasonably prosperous condition.

And here, we wish to call attention to the fact that at the installation of Deacons, which, if we remember correctly, took place, for the first time, in 1869, a reso-

lution, introduced by the writer, was adopted in a congregational meeting, declaring "that Deacons and their successors in office shall also be *ex officio*, the Trustees of the church." This fact is not a matter of record, but is important in a legal point of view.

From 1870 to 1873 the church was supplied, occasionally, by licentiates and other invited ministers, but for the greater part of the time by Rev. E. F. Rockwell, D. D. In October of the latter year Rev. J. B. Mack, D. D., held a protracted meeting here, which greatly revived the church, and resulted in the addition of 46 members to our roll of communicants.

In the fall of 1873, the Rev. R. W. Boyd, from South Carolina, visiting this church and Unity, accepted calls from them and in 1874 became their joint pastor. He continued as such, until 1878, when he withdrew to Franklin and Unity.

During the next four years, from 1879 to 1882, inclusive, the Rev. A. L. Crawford gave us half of his time, as stated supply. Residing in Mocksville, he divided the other half between that church and Bethesda. During a protracted meeting held here in the fall of 1879, conducted almost entirely by Mr. Crawford, 68 names were added to our roll of communicants—the largest number, remembered by us, as the result of any one meeting, held at any time, in this church.

In October, 1883, Rev. A. Walker White accepted a call from this church and Fifth Creek, and remained until January, 1887, when he removed to Texas. During his pastorate a neat and comfortable manse was erected by this congregation, at Elmwood, on a lot generously donated by Mr. Geo. F. Shepherd.

In December, 1887, Mr. White was succeeded by Rev. T. J. Allison, who, in addition to Third and Fifth Creek, became Pastor also of the new church, Elmwood, besides preaching occasionally at the new chapel at Cleveland. In May, 1891, he removed to Georgia, to enter upon evangelistic work in Savannah Presbytery.

Our present Pastor, the Rev. R. S. Arrowood, commenced his labors in the field left vacant by Mr. Allison, August 1st, 1891.

It thus appears that during the past one hundred years, Third Creek has had eight regular Pastors, who have preached, as such, seventy-seven years, an average

of nearly ten ($9\frac{5}{8}$) years to each. About thirteen of the remaining years were taken up by stated supplies, and the remaining ten by invited ministers and appointees of Presbytery. And it is not believed that any entire year of the past hundred has passed without more or less preaching in this church. For all of which let us thank God and take courage.—Acts xxviii—15.

Ruling Elders.

For reasons already given, it is not positively known who were the first Elders in this church. The tradition that Andrew Morrison, to whom allusion has been made, was one of the very first seems to be well authenticated.

There is a tradition also, among the descendants of Samuel Luckey, George Niblock and Thomas Dickey, who, as we have seen, acted as trustees in 1792, that they were also Elders. Samuel Luckey was, probably, a grand uncle of one of our present Deacons. George Niblock was the great-grand-father of five of the members of our church, bearing his name, and Thomas Dickey was the father of the late Mrs. David Waddell, and it is said was an active church man in his day.

Thomas Porter, who died in September, 1800, and whose remains lie in our graveyard, and upon whose tombstone is inscribed the words, "In whose death his family, his friends, the State and the church sustained a loss," was without doubt an Elder, and as such, represented this church in Presbytery when it met here in 1797. The writer feels grateful for the fact that Mr. Porter was his great-grand-father on his mother's side.

James Graham, whose name appears on the records of Presbytery in 1798, 1807, 1826 and subsequently, was, in all probability, the James Graham known to have been an Elder for years, time out of mind, before his death, which occurred in 1834. We allude to the father of Abel and Porter Graham, both deceased, and the grand-father, on the mother's side of the Rev. R. Z. Johnston, and the writer. In 1798 Mr. Graham was 35 years old, and if an Elder then, he must have been one at the organization of the church, or shortly after.

Previous to the year 1820, the names of John Witherspoon, James Rutledge, Benjamin Brandon, John Dickey, James Montgomery, Thomas Cowan, Thomas Dickson, Andrew and Robert McNeely, Andrew

Knox, and of others familiar to us, appear in the records of Presbytery, as Elders. But whether any of them were from this church, we have not been able to ascertain.

The name of Robert Johnston, who was an acting Elder up to the time of his death, which occurred November, 1841, and who was the father of the Rev. R. Z. Johnston, appears on the roll of Presbytery, for the first time, in 1821, and that of Abel Graham, for many years clerk of session, and in 1837, Steward of Davidson College, appears there likewise in 1823. Henry C. Burke, who died October 29th, 1832, in the 49th year of his age, is known to have been an Elder by those still living.

In 1834, we find the name of William B. Wood, the father of Rev. William A. Wood, D. D., and in 1835, that of Rufus H. Kilpatrick, son of the Rev. Joseph D. Kilpatrick, on the roll of Presbytery, for those years. Mr. Kilpatrick was clerk of Session from 1837 to 1842, about which latter time he removed to Alabama, where he died several years ago. Mr. Wood, a useful Elder, and one of the substantial men of the church, serving as Treasurer for many years, succeeding Mr. Kilpatrick as Clerk of Session, and continued as such for nearly twenty years before his death, which occurred October 23rd, 1853.

In addition to the names of Messrs. Johnston, Graham, Wood and Kilpatrick, just noticed, we find also the names of Jacob Hughey and Benjamin Phifer recorded in our church book, in 1837; but we find no record anywhere about the election or ordination of any of them. Mr. Hughey died in November, 1855, and Mr. Phifer in November, 1882. These fathers served their church and generation well, and were, in many respects, models of prudence, modesty and piety.

In 1842, Jacob Krider, father of Rev. B. S. Krider, deceased, Matthew L. Steele and Aaron V. Cowan were added to the Eldership. These faithful fathers have also fallen "on sleep." Mr. Steele died January, 1846, Mr. Cowan January, 1850, and Mr. Krider October, 1874, at the advanced age of 86 years.

In 1846, Thomas A. Burke and Rufus M. Roseborough were elected and ordained. Mr. Burke—a wise and prudent counsellor—after serving about twenty-two

years, removed with his family to Statesville in 1868, where he died November, 1881. He never removed his membership from Third Creek, and his remains lie, with those of his fathers, in our graveyard. Mr. Roseborough was a graduate from our State University, in the class of 1832. His capacity for usefulness was great, and was modestly and efficiently used. He acted as clerk of Session for about sixteen years previous to his temporary removal to Lenoir. He served as an Elder about thirty-two years, and at his death, which occurred January 30th, 1878, he left valuable manuscripts which have enabled us, as we trust, to rescue much of the history of our church from oblivion.

In 1854, John D. Johnston and James G. Ramsay, M. D., were elected and ordained. It has pleased a kind Providence to spare us in this official capacity for nearly thirty-eight years. Mr. Johnston, we regret to say, on account of bodily infirmity, has not been able to meet with the Session more than once or twice for several years past, but we are all glad to see him able to be present with us to-day.

In 1866, John E. Poston and William L. Steele were added to our number. Mr. Poston—an earnest and good man—removed to Statesville, and died there shortly afterwards, on the 21st of August, 1876. His remains are also interred here. Upon the temporary removal of Mr. Roseborough to Lenoir in 1870, Mr. Steele was chosen clerk of Session, and served in that capacity about fourteen years.

In 1884, Robert N. Fleming, John H. Carson and Benj. F. Phifer were elected and installed, and, Mr. Steele resigning his position as clerk, Mr. R. N. Fleming was chosen to fill it. The Session, at present, consists of

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| John Dickey Johnston, | 1854. |
| James Graham Ramsay, | " |
| William Locke Steele, Sr., | 1866. |
| Robert Nesbit Fleming, | Clerk, 1884. |
| John Houston Carson, | " |
| Benjamin Franklin Phifer, | " |

Trustees and Deeds.

Our church records do not show who were Trustees until the time when the office of Trustee was consolidated with that of the Deacon. This was probably due to the fact that the former was considered a secular

rather than a religious office. Hence, the earlier Trustees seem to have been appointed by those making deeds to the congregation, and hence also, when the congregation came to choose Trustees, persons were sometimes selected who were not members of the church.

That it may be seen who have acted as Trustees, it is necessary to resume our narrative of deeds, as these alone show who the Trustees have been.

It is not necessary to recur to the deed made by Samuel Young in 1792, except to note the fact that Samuel Luckey, George Niblock and Thomas Dickey acted as Trustees by his appointment.

In 1817, "Caleb Webb, son of Daniel Webb," deeded one quarter of an acre of land, adjoining that deeded by Samuel Young, to William Gay, Robert Johnston, and Benjamin Knox, as Trustees.

In 1825, a deed for two and a half acres, was made by Samuel Young, a descendant of the Samuel Young who made the deed in 1792, to Robert Johnston, Henry C. Burke, John Waddell, Joseph Chambers and Abel Graham, as Trustees.

In 1834, two deeds, one for seven-tenths of an acre, and the other for three and eight-tenths acres, were made by W. B. Wood to Matthew L. Steele, Wm. P. Graham, William Burke, Lemuel D. Johnston and Joseph Chambers, Trustees, not, it will be observed, as Trustees, as in the foregoing deeds.

In 1841, John Irvin deeded three and three-fourths acres, to Matthew L. Steele, Wm. P. Graham, Joseph Chambers, Joseph Irvin and William Burke, Trustees.

In 1846, John W. Johnston and his wife, Eliza, deeded two and a half acres and twenty-six square poles, to David Waddell, Wm. P. Graham, Joseph Irvin, Moses D. Kilpatrick, John Luckey, Silas Phifer and Rufus D. Johnston, Trustees.

In 1884, George F. Shepherd and his wife, Mary L., donated one acre, lying in Elmwood, to John G. Fleming, John W. Steele, William A. Luckey, John N. Phifer and Robert N. Fleming, "Deacons and Trustees."

In 1887, a donation of three acres, adjoining and lying north of our other church lands, was made by Joseph C. Irvin and his wife, M. Kate, of Statesville, to John W. Steele, William A. Luckey, John M. Cowan,

Julius A. Lyerly, J. A. Wolfe and J. N. Phifer, "Trustees and officers."

These deeds and donations secure to the church about twenty acres, all lying in a body, except one acre in Elmwood.

We have not been able to learn the names of all who acted as Trustees, during the years intervening the execution of these deeds, but it is known that J. D. Johnston, J. G. Ramsay, M. D., J. K. Graham, Wm. P. Burke, and perhaps others, served part of the time.

Deacons.

In the year 1869, when the office of Trustee was combined with that of the Deacon, by the vote of the congregation, above noted, John G. Fleming, Charles C. Krider, John W. Steele, John N. Morgan and William F. Hall were elected, ordained and installed Deacons and Trustees. In 1877, William A. Luckey, John N. Phifer and Robert N. Fleming were added, Messrs. Hall and Morgan having removed to Statesville, and Mr. Krider to Salisbury, (where he died recently) and Mr. Robert N. Fleming, being transferred to the eldership, Messrs. J. A. Lyerly, J. M. Cowan, and J. A. Wolfe were also added in 1884. Mr. Wolfe having withdrawn to Elmwood, and Mr. John G. Fleming and Mr. Cowan and Phifer having passed over the river to their reward, Mr. J. W. Foster, who had been a member and Deacon in Fifth Creek Church, was elected and installed in February of this year, 1892.

The Diaconate, at present, consists of
John Wilson Steele, 1869.

William Anderson Lucky, Jr., 1877.

Julius Alexander Lyerly, 1884.

James Washington Foster, 1892.

Territory and Churches.

So far as we have been able to learn, Third Creek was the only church of any denomination between Thyatira and Bethany, and Fourth Creek, Old Unity and Joppa, in 1792. Third Creek, Unity and Joppa were organized about the same time. Joppa, now called Mocksville, was situated about one mile north-west of that town. Old Unity, now called Unity, was, until 1800, when it was removed, situated about four miles east of its present location. Third Creek was cut

off from Thyatira, Fourth Creek and Bethany, and embraced all the territory, within the above designated limits. At present there are within those limits four white and four colored Presbyterian churches, not including Third Creek itself, and the new chapel at Cleveland. Also, one Episcopal, one Methodist, one Lutheran and two Baptist white churches, and three Methodist colored churches—sixteen in all of different evangelical denominations, and so far as the white and colored churches are concerned, of different ecclesiastical connections. Adding the colored to the white Presbyterian, and including Third Creek and Cleveland Chapel—which will doubtless, soon become an organized church—we have now ten churches of the Presbyterian faith, where we only had one a hundred years ago. An addition of only one church to our number every ten years, shows a rate of progress sufficiently deliberate.

Ministers—Children of the Church.

It will strike every reflecting mind, as one of the more important statements of this narrative, that eight Presbyterian ministers of the Gospel have gone out from this congregation, having belonged to its membership or been born within its limits. Their names are Josiah J. and Abner Kirkpatrick, Robert A. and Thomas P. Johnston, William H. Johnston, Barnabas S. Krider, William A. Wood, D. D., and Robert Z. Johnston.

Only two of these, Dr. Wood and Rev. R. Z. Johnston, are still living, and permitted to participate with us on this interesting occasion. It would be edifying and inspiring to trace the lives of those who have passed away, and to lay a fresh wreath upon their graves, but that is impossible. The remains of only one of them—the lamented Krider—about whose memory many tender emotions still cling, lie in the same enclosure, with those of the venerated father Kilpatrick. Wherever those of the others lie, we believe they have only fallen asleep, to rise at the resurrection of the just.

But important and edifying as these statements may be, it might be more important still to inquire, if time would permit, why it is, that all of these ministers went out from us during the first seventy of the past hundred years, and none during the past thirty?

Characteristics.

Practical piety and devotion to the church were, preeminently, characteristic of the great majority of the members of this church, in the past and preceeding generations. With them, private, family and public prayer, was the rule. Catechetical instruction of children and colored servants, was not neglected, especially on the Sabbath. The sanctity of the Sabbath was strictly observed, and visiting on that day, except among near relatives, or to relieve the sick, was neither approved nor practiced. The Sabbath School, the Bible class, and monthly concert for prayer were faithfully attended by young and old; while scarcely any stress of weather prevented a large attendance of women and children, men and boys, from the remotest parts of the congregation, whenever the church was opened for preaching, prayer or praise.

Once or twice a year, generally before communion seasons, the roads leading to the church, the church itself, the graveyard, and the arbor and stand where services were held when the congregation was too large to be seated in the church, were all repaired, cleaned up and put in order. The galleries of the church were generally well filled with colored people on the Sabbath, and especially on communion occasions. Communicants were served after tokens were given, seated at long tables, covered with clean white linen. The white people preceded the colored in the order of communing, and made room for them, without unnecessarily leaving the church themselves, when the tables were served within the body of the church.

Music was cultivated in social circles, not for recreation alone, but as a preparation for the services of the sanctuary. Card-playing and dancing were generally tabooed by the more refined as sensual and sinful. The manufacture of whiskey, and especially of brandy, was common, but indulgence in the use of spiritous liquors seldom went to the point of hilarity. Their manufacture and the morning dram and social glass became less common until, eventually, entire abstinence became the rule with the more exemplary church members.

Schools and academies, taught by the best of scholars—by such Pastors as Kilpatrick and Adams,

and such instructors as Profs. M. D. Johnston and Archibald Neely—were well patronized, and the training of the young men for the gospel ministry was regarded as preparation for the highest earthly honor.

Encouragements.

The generation of the past has done its work, and in the main, has done it well. It has placed us on high, vantage ground; but it has not done our work. Each generation has its own special and peculiar work to do, else one generation would not pass away and another come. The blessings of men, churches and nations are conditioned upon activity and fidelity. The slothful come to want; the unfaithful to grief. If we would do our work, and do it well, we must be up and at it to-day, for perhaps to-morrow, certainly the third day, we must "go hence."

As a church, it is true that we have lost many valuable members by death and removals since the late war. The names of the Waddells, Chambers, Brandons, Kerrs, Postons, Burkes, Halls, Irvins, Kriders and others have nearly or entirely disappeared from our church roll. But we do not despond. Our loss has been the gain of the other churches. We have lost, recently, more than a score of members by the organization of Elmwood. But should we not rejoice rather than complain? New organizations, when judiciously located, are only the advance guards of the grand army, and their camp-fires light up the highway of the conquering hosts of the Lord in their onward march. But, if we have had seasons of loneliness and apprehension we have had refreshing times of encouragement, as well. Times when sinners flocked to our sacred portals "as doves to their windows," and when members, by the score, have been added to the church. And, to-day, with a church membership of one hundred and twenty, officered, as we have seen, by six Elders and four Deacons, all under the leadership of a faithful Pastor; with a Home Missionary Society of men, and a Foreign Missionary Society of women, with a Sabbath School for children and adults, with the inspiring memories of the past, and above all, with the promises of a covenant-keeping God to sustain and cheer, we have the capacity for much good, and the highest incentives to go forward. "Let us then not be weary in well doing,

for in due season we shall reap if we faint not."—Gal. vi:10.

And now, may "the Lord our God be with us as he was with our fathers; let him not leave us, nor forsake us; that He may incline our hearts unto Him, to walk in all His ways and to keep His commandments, and His statutes, and His judgments, which he commanded our fathers."—1 Kings viii:57-8.

THIRD CREEK CHURCH, MAY 13, 1892.

The centennial exercises, held in the church to-day, were commenced with singing by the choir, reading of the scriptures by the Pastor, Rev. R. S. Arrowood, prayer by the Rev. W. R. McLelland, and an address of welcome by Mr. J. B. Johnston.

The historic sketch, prepared by Dr. J. G. Ramsay, and herewith published, by request of the session, was then read by him. The Rev. W. A. Wood, D. D., of Statesville, who was born and raised in this congregation, followed in a short address, devoted mainly, to a *resumé* of the early impressions made upon his mind when a boy attending this church—the unusual dignity, gravity and politeness of the older members; the zeal, piety and reverence manifested in their worship and every day life, and the readiness with which they responded to the calls of duty. He touched also upon some of the more important events connected with the history of the church, notably, to the meeting of Synod here in 1838, and to the eloquent sermon of the Rev. John Breckenridge and its substantial results on that occasion.

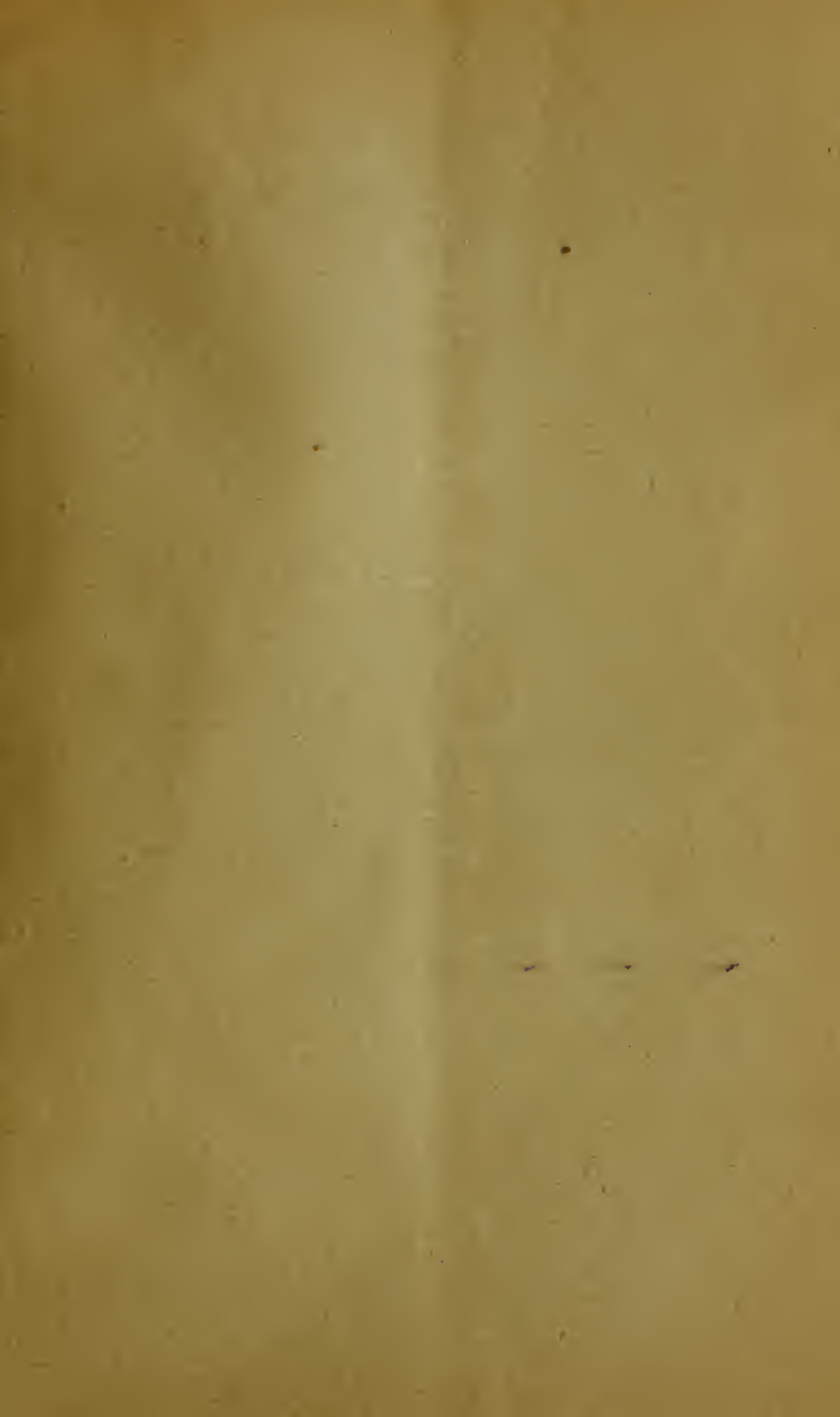
Recess being announced, the large audience of perhaps a thousand persons, repaired to the grove and partook of an ample and elegant public dinner.

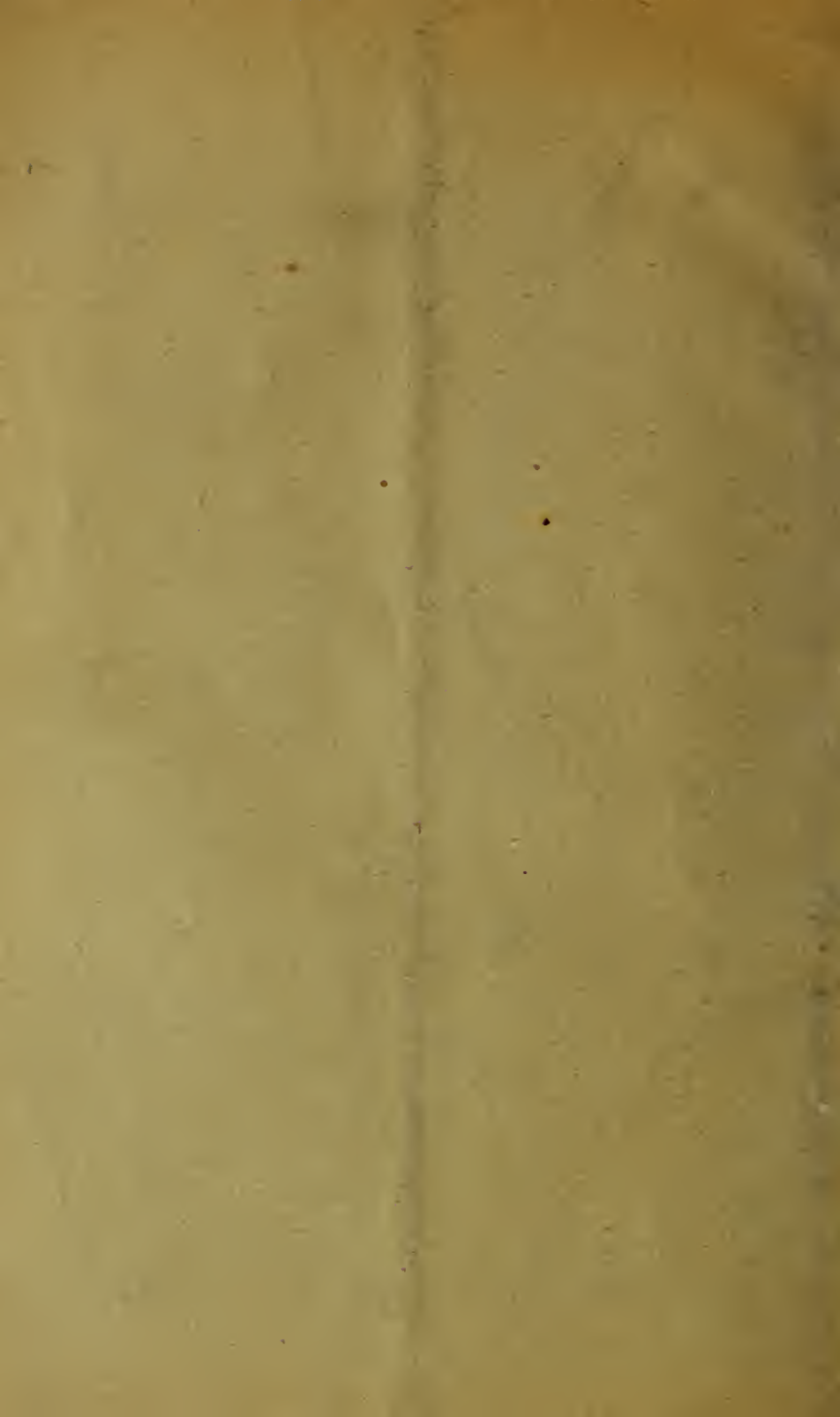
The afternoon exercises embraced addresses by the Rev. R. Z. Johnston, of Lincolnton, who was also born and raised in the congregation, and the Rev. R. S. Arrowood. Mr. Johnston traced the early settlement of this State by French refugees; the Protestant principles introduced here by them; the amalgamation of their doctrines with those of the Scotch Irish and Welsh, who afterwards settled here, and their propagation to the present day. He then showed what Presbyterianism had done, and what it could do—the purity and conservatism of its safe-guards, and the strength it had in its Eldership.

Mr. Arrowood followed—treating mainly but briefly, of the spirit of unrest pervading the country, the various causes assigned for it, and the only sovereign remedy, which is, "to bring the practice of the world into conformity to the teachings of divine revelation." The choir then sang "God be with you till we meet again," and the exercises were closed with prayer and benediction by the Pastor.

The weather was fine; the music good; the order excellent; the speeches appropriate and edifying; the reunions numerous and joyous; and the occasion altogether too memorable to be soon forgotten.

J. B. JOHNSTON, Secretary.





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